

Message Text

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SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT EXPLAINS EC BENEFITS TO FARMERS AT
CONFERENCE OF COOPERATIVES

REF: ATHENS A-37

1. CONTINUING ITS EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN THE BENEFITS WHICH WILL
ACCRUE TO GREECE FROM EC ENTRY AND ENHANCE POPULAR SUPPORT FOR
ITS POLICY, THE GOVERNMENT ACTIVELY PARTICIPATED IN A CONFERENCE
OF THE PANHELLENIC CONFEDERATION OF AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVE
UNIONS (PASEGES) HELD IN ATHENS LAST WEEK. GOVERNMENT
SPEAKERS APPEARING BEFORE THE 2,000 DELEGATES INCLUDED PRIME
MINISTER CARAMANLIS, MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBLE
FOR EC AFFAIRS KONTOTHEODORIS, AGRICULTURE MINISTER TALIADOUROU,
AND AGRICULTURAL BANK GOVERNOR PEPELASSIS.

2. THE PRIME MINISTER, AT THE OPENING SESSION, HIGH-
LIGHTED THE BENEFITS GREEK FARMERS WILL RECEIVE FROM EC
ACCESSION. HE MENTIONED (A) HIGHER INCOME FOR THEIR
PRODUCE, AS GREECE ADOPTS THE COMMON AGRICULTURAL POLICY
(CAP) LEVEL OF SUPPORT PRICES; (B) FREE ACCESS TO EC
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MARKETS WITHOUT COUNTERVAILLING DUTIES OR OTHER BARRIERS;
(C) POSSIBLE FEOGA (AGRICULTURE GUARANTEE AND GUIDANCE FUND)
SUBSIDIES ON EXPORTS TO THIRD COUNTRIES; (D) FEOGA
FINANCING FOR PROJECTS TO IMPROVE AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY;
AND (E) FINANCING FOR INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS IN LESS-
DEVELOPED REGIONS THROUGH THE EC DEVELOPMENT FUND. ACCORDING
TO EC CALCULATIONS, HE SAID, GREEK AGRICULTURE SHOULD

RECEIVE AT LEAST \$450 MILLION ANNUALLY IN FINANCING BENEFITS. CARAMANLIS THEN URGED FARMERS, FOR THEIR PART, TO INTENSIFY EFFORTS TO IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS AND PRODUCT QUALITY, AND TO "FREE THEMSELVES FROM DEMAGOGIC INFLUENCES, "I.E., THE OPPOSITION'S CAMPAIN AGAINST ACCESSION.

3. KONTOGEORGIS, IN HIS SPEECH, EXPLAINING THE CAP PRICING MECHANISM AND THE EFFECT IT WILL HAVE ON GREEK PRODUCTS. HE ALSO CHALLENGED THE OPPOSITION'S ARGUMENT THAT GREEK FARMERS WILL LOSE THIRD-COUNTRY MARKETS THROUGH ENTRY. TALIADOUROIS DESCRIBED IN DETAIL THE PROGRESS THE AGRICULTURE MINISTRY HHAS MADE IN PREPARING FOR ACCESSION. HE PARTICULARLY EMPHASIZED THE INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (SEE REFAIR).

4. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE CONFERENCE, AGRICULTURE BANK GOVERNOR PEPELASIS STRESSED THAT EC MEMBERSHIP WILL BRING THE GREEK FARMER NEW OPPORTUNITIES , IN THE FORM OF LARGER MARKETS DEVELOPMENT FUNDS, AND NEW INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS. HOWEVER, HE CAUTIONED, THE FARMER MUST EXPLOIT THESE OPPORTUNITIES THROUGH HIS OWN INITIATIVE AND EFFORTS AND, IN EFFECT, BECOME A BUSINESSMAN USING MODERN METHODS AND TECHNOLOGY. IT IS TIME FOR A STRUCTURAL CHANGE IN GREECE'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR, BE NOTED.

5. THIS IS THE LATEST AND PERHAPS MOST IMPRESSIVE EFFORT
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TO DATE BY THE GOVERNMENT TO COUNTER OPPOSITION CHARGES THAT ACCESSION TO THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY WILL SPELL DISLOCATION AND RUIN FOR GREECE'S AGRICULTURAL POPULATION. AT THE SAME TIME, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT A NEW BILL WOULD SOON BE PROPOSED IN THE PARLIAMENT THAT WILL AIM AT RAISING THE PROFESSIONAL AND CULTURAL STANDARDS OF THE FARMING COMMUNITY AND BRING AGRICULTURAL COOPERATIVES CLOSER INTO LINE WITH THOSE IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY.
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